

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1 and 9-22 were rejected. Claim 1 has been amended.

The Examiner indicated that the claim to prior applications on the first page of the application should indicate the relationship of the present application to such prior applications. The specification has been amended to indicate that the present application is a divisional application of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/887,543. The objection is believed addressed thereby.

The Examiner objected to the drawings for a variety of informalities. Replacement drawing sheets including Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 23 have been provided herewith making the necessary corrections and the objection is believed addressed thereby.

The Examiner objected to the specification, requesting capitalization of trademarks. Appropriate amendments to the specification have been made and the objection is believed addressed thereby.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, 11, 12 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over International Publication No. WO/99/28765 (Mueller) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,221,843 (Alvarez). The Examiner also rejected claim 10 as being unpatentable over Mueller and Alvarez and further in view of U.S. Patents No. 6,239,516 (Floresta) and No. 5,912,944 (Budinski). The Examiner also rejected claims 13-15 as being unpatentable over Mueller and Alvarez and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,757,021 (Dewaele). The Examiner also rejected claims 16-19 as being unpatentable over Mueller and Alvarez and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,864,146 (Karellas). The Examiner also rejected claim 21 over Mueller and Alvarez in view of Floresta, and claim 22 over Mueller and Alvarez in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Mueller describes an x-ray cassette which contains a phosphor carrier and a device for

reading out information stored in the phosphor carrier. The device includes a radiation source for exciting the phosphor carrier, and a receiving means for receiving the resulting radiation. See Abstract. Referring to the description in U.S. Patent No. 6,373,074 (i.e., the U.S. patent claiming priority from Mueller), the receiving means is described as a CCD 12 in combination with a Selfoc lens assembly 14 which focuses the excitation radiation on the individual elements of the CCD. See column 5, lines 10-27. Notably, Mueller states that “[i]t is possible to limit the thickness of the x-ray cassette to about 45 mm.”

By contrast, the cassette enclosure recited in claim 1 of the present application has “a form factor corresponding to a standard radiographic film cassette.” And as stated in the present specification at page 19, lines 22-25, standard size radiography cassettes are “defined by international standard IEC 60406, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.” As provided for in that document (a copy of which has been submitted in an IDS herewith), the maximum thickness for most standard radiographic cassettes is 15 mm (with the exception of the 16.5 mm thickness for non-preferred formats not intended to fit into standard “bucky” tray as radiography cassette trays).

Despite the language in Mueller and Alvarez regarding compatibility with conventional equipment, neither of the references teaches a device which can conform to the form factor recited in claim 1 and referred to in the present specification. Rather, Mueller explicitly indicates that its lower limit on cassette thickness is at least three times the upper limit of the preferred standard cassettes defined by IEC 60406. This is due to the fact that the receiving means in Mueller, i.e., the CCD and Selfoc lens system, cannot be compressed below the stated limit due in large part to optical considerations. This is to be contrasted with the present invention which offers a variety of embodiments which are not so constrained.

Therefore, because Mueller’s system cannot be enclosed in a cassette “having a form factor corresponding to a standard radiographic film cassette” as recited in claim 1, the rejection

of claim 1 over the combination of Mueller and Alvarez is believed overcome. In addition, the rejections of claims 2-22 are believed overcome for at least the reasons discussed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, claim 1 has been amended to more clearly describe the form factor of the recited cassette enclosure. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the form factor corresponds "to a thickness of the cassette enclosure which is less than about 15 mm." As discussed above, the Applicant believes claim 1 to be patentable over the art of record. Therefore, this amendment is being presented for clarification purposes only and not for any reason related to patentability.

The Applicant respectfully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 2-8 include allowable subject matter. However, in view of the foregoing, the Applicant believes these claims to be allowable without further amendment.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at (510) 843-6200.

Respectfully submitted,
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